

Hillandale

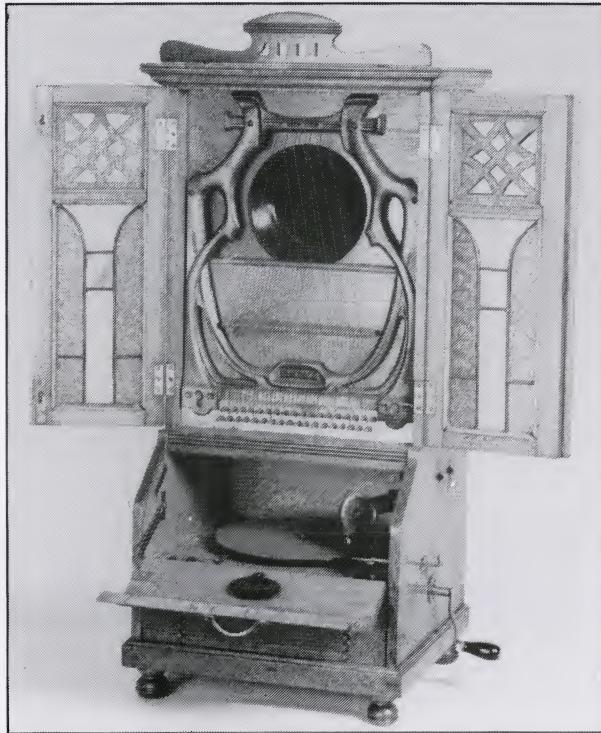
News

No 197 April 1994



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Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded in 1919

Patrons: Oliver Berliner and Kathleen Darby



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Front cover illustration: Andrew Walter at work in E.M.I.'s Abbey Road studios

EDITOR'S DESK



Survey Forms

I would like to thank the many members who have completed and returned the survey forms sent out with the last issue. At the time of writing forms from over 25% of our membership have arrived on my desk and they are still flooding in! The Committee will have their time cut out collating all the information and putting some of the suggestions into action. Once everything has been sorted out I hope to publish an analysis in *Hillandale News*. One or two people have expressed reservations about the confidentiality of the survey. I would like to reiterate that all information on these forms will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used only to guide the Committee in the way it conducts the Society's affairs.

Norman White of Nimbus Records Ltd.

On page 3 of this issue Miles Mallinson has described the new gramophone that Nimbus Records have constructed to use in the production of their *Prima Voce* CDs. I would remind members that they have a chance to hear Norman White of Nimbus Records talk about 'Big Bertha' and play extracts from some of the CDs made from 78s played on this machine. This takes place on Thursday April 21st 1994 at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, London at 6.45pm. All are welcome to come along.

Andrew Walter of EMI Records Ltd.

Andrew Walter, a transfer engineer with EMI Records Ltd., has had many CDs issued which demonstrate his skills. Many of these enable the listener to enjoy original recordings in a fidelity and quality of sound that he has not previously been able to hear. Andrew will be telling us some of his secrets and letting us hear some of the results at the National Sound Archive on May 19th at 6.45pm. All are welcome to come along.

Brian Rust

I would like to welcome the well-known discographer and writer, Brian Rust, to our columns. He is a member of the Society and I am sure our readers will enjoy what he has to contribute to our hobby.

London Meetings in July and August

Allen Debus will be giving us a talk when he visits this country in the late summer/early autumn. We have provisionally booked him for the August Meeting, but may have to swap it at the last moment with the July Meeting. It all depends on his tight schedule. We will try to notify our readers of any changes.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the June issue will be **15th April 1994**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

THE BIG BERTHA EXPERIENCE

by L. Miles Mallinson

In June 1992 I was preparing to rehearse as a member of Ulverston Choral Society, when our Chairman, Cyril Fayle, turned to me and said, "Here, Miles! there is a good article in there I think might interest you; you can keep it, as I have finished with it." He handed me a copy of the *Telegraph Magazine* for 27th June 1992, showing the face of a South American Ashaninka Indian girl on its front page. I thought he referred to that subject and thanked him. He then told me to open the magazine at the article which followed that of the Ashaninka peoples, when my eyes fell on a photograph of three large gramophone horns seen in full frontal. Seated forward of the central horn was Count Numa Labinski, the founder of Nimbus Records, the first British company to build a compact disc manufacturing plant.

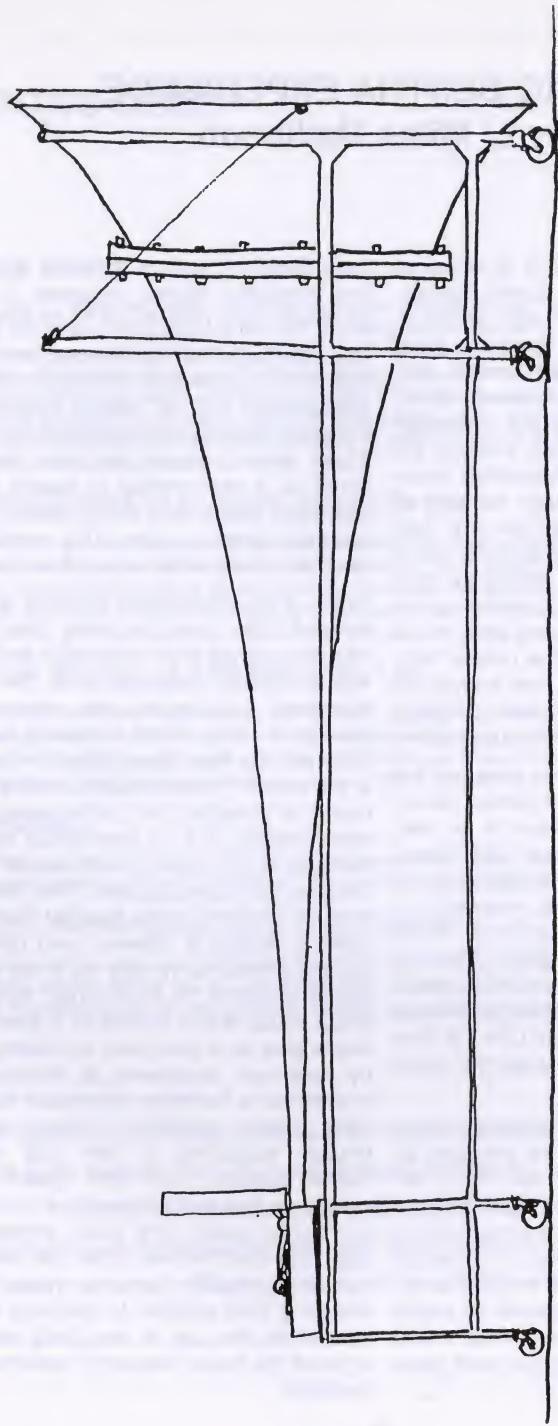
The three gramophone horns were: on the left, a 1935 E. M. Ginn Expert Senior (which is a very interesting machine in its own right), but the other two were quite incredible. That on the right was straightened out version of the Ginn machine, coupled to a modified Ginn arm and sound-box. In the centre of the page was a horn mouth of enormous size, towering over the seated figure of the Count, who had set up Nimbus in the early 1970s to produce LPs. He also made recordings as a bass under the name Shura Gerzman.

Having read the article, I discovered that in 1989 Norman White joined the company as a consultant. He took with him his E. M. Ginn machine, which he used to transfer the original recordings of the early operatic stars straight on to master tape for issue as compact discs. Nimbus use Ambisonic microphones, sensitive to variations of sound in all three axes, but having their sound reception focussed at one point, and place

them directly in front of the horn, to receive that wonderful sound, incapable of being produced using modern 'Hi-Fi' equipment.

Two years ago Norman decided to try out a theory of improvement. The Ginn horn was 'straightened out', to reduce distortions in the upper frequencies caused by the bends. These were originally built into the Ginn horns as a compromise to enable a very long horn (eight feet) to be placed in the domestic listening room. This modification resulted in even better sound than the Ginn.

Finally a no-compromise machine was envisaged. This was to cover the whole frequency range then recordable and more, with a smooth response over the whole spectrum. A computer was employed to develop the horn, which is **twenty two feet long and six feet nine inches** in diameter at the mouth. It was manufactured by a boat builder in fibreglass and carried on a tubular steel chassis. It is of exponential form. At the rear of the horn is the cabinet which contains the operating end. The tone arm was constructed by the musical instrument makers Boosey & Hawkes, and continues the exponential curve right up to the sound-box. The arm is 14 inches long, having no sharp bends and is carried on a special ball swivel joint at its pivot end, this being made by their own engineers at Nimbus. The sound-box is however developed from the Ginn Expert sound-box, having its diaphragm supported in very soft sponge rubber gaskets. The front gasket is of square section and the rear one round, and very lightly loaded. The space between the diaphragm and the rear of the box has been increased slightly, and is varied when switching from acoustic to electrical recordings when the gap is marginally wider to improve the lower frequency response then available.



Finely sharpened thorn needles are used, with a tracking weight of only **twenty grams** (much less than the five ounces normally considered suitable for such a sound-box). The tracking weight is adjusted by a counter weight system built into the arm swivel assembly. Even vinyl records can be played!

The Technics SP15 turntable is a state of the art machine with very fine speed adjustment being possible (necessary to play the records at their correct pitch). They are all set to play at modern concert pitch although some of these performances were likely to have been made at frequencies slightly above or below this.

I was amazed at the article in the *Telegraph Magazine*, but never dreamt that I would be given the opportunity to see and better still, to hear 'Big Bertha' in action. The first move in that direction came when Norman White 'phoned and asked me if he could call to discuss a possible fibre needle cutter development. This meeting failed as I was about to go on holiday, but I inquired if it would be possible to see the 'Monster'. It was not really possible as 'Big Bertha' is a working girl and not a public attraction.

Then in November last year I got a telephone call from Chris Hamilton asking if I could Nimbus, possibly in January, to study and write an article for *Hillendale News* on the subject of 'Big Bertha'. You can imagine my excitement on receiving this opportunity.

Norman White finally arranged for me to visit him at the Wyastone Leys plant on 16th February, and I travelled down to Gloucester the day before to visit a friend and look at his EMG Mk10B with oversize horn and his E. M. Ginn Junior.

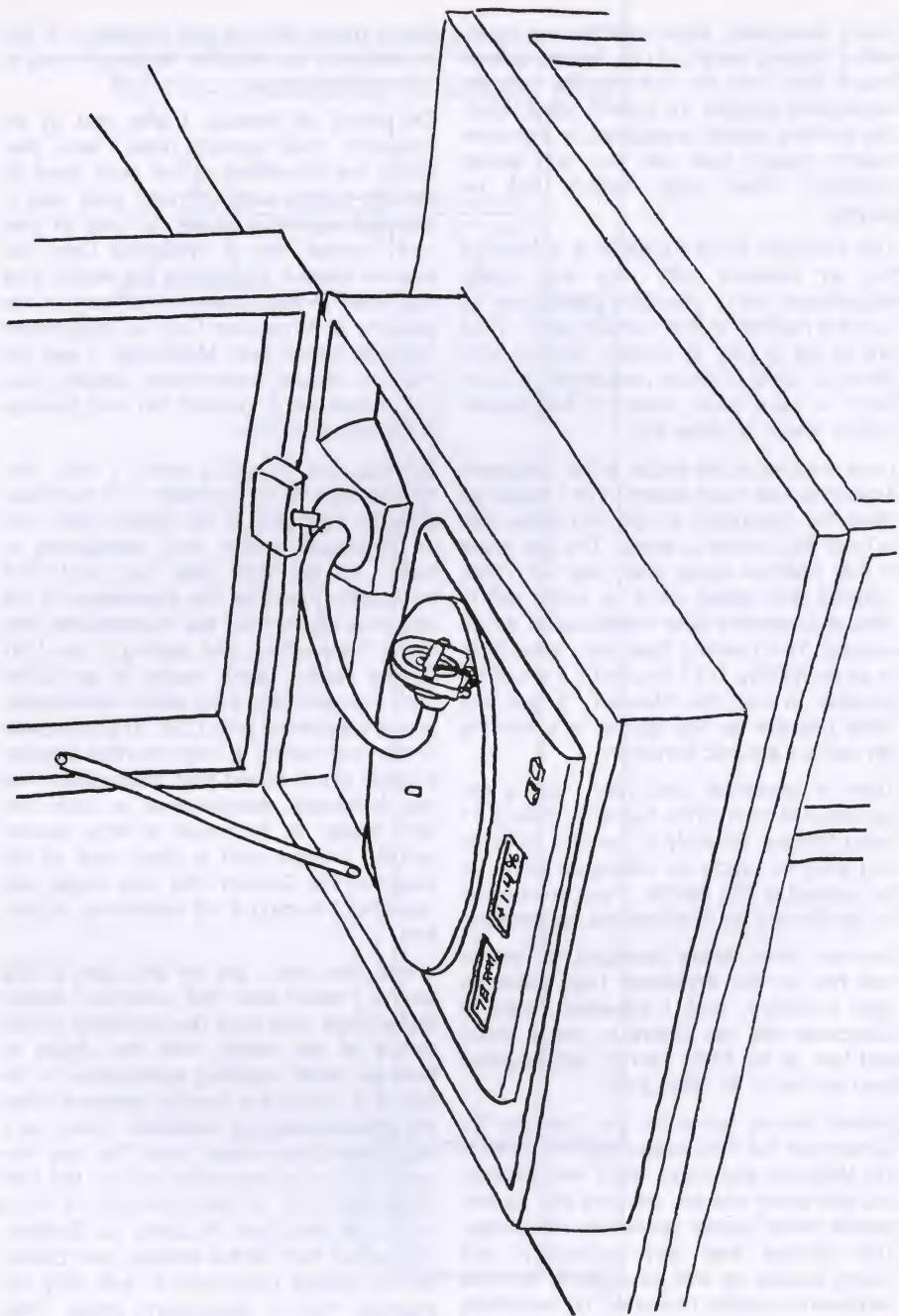
Before leaving home on the Tuesday for Gloucester, the BBC stated that the roads in the Midlands and South were very dangerous with snow and ice, advising that no one should travel unless absolutely necessary. This journey was very necessary, and having loaded up with food, flask, blankets and even a spade, I travelled on beautifully

empty roads with no real problems. It just shows what the weather advisers know of the real conditions!

On arrival at Nimbus, I was met by Alf Goodrich, their publicity man, who after telling me something of the work done by Nimbus (which covers a very wide field of classical recording, done not only in their new Concert Hall at Wyastone Leys, but also on location throughout the world), took me down to that Concert Hall built in the grounds of Wyastone Leys, a magnificent mansion house near Monmouth. I was led into this clinical environment wearing special overshoes to prevent dirt and damage to the beautiful floors.

Entering the recording room I was very impressed with the simplicity. The engineer, Dominic Fyfe was at the control desk with an overspeak button and microphone at hand. To his right was the UHJ DAT transcoder used for the conversion of the incoming signal from the microphones into digital information and storing it on DAT (Digital Audio Tape), ready to be coded onto a master disc from which the information is transferred onto CDs. At each corner of the room stood a large monitor speaker through which sound was transmitted from the Ambisonic microphones or from the DAT tapes. In front was a large sound-proofed window with a clear view of the stage in the Concert Hall (this stage was capable of holding a full symphony orchestra).

It was then that I got my first sight of 'Big Bertha', which from that viewpoint looked like a huge dark grey disc standing on the centre of the stage, with the figure of Norman White standing somewhere to the rear of it. Out of the monitor speakers came the glorious voice of Geraldine Farrar, as it had never been heard since the day she stood before the recording horn on the 20th December 1912, to record the disc of *Si, mi chiamano Mimi* from Puccini's *La Bohème*. The sound had all the delicacy and beauty of the original performance, with only the slightest hint of background noise. After



what seemed like only seconds this magnificent sensation was brought to an abrupt halt when Dominic pressed the overspeak button and said "I think there was a slight blast there, could you go back a little and repeat? Oh, Norman, Miles has arrived." A sound of a needle changing followed and then that heavenly experience continued. "I think that got it" broke in Dominic. With about six more takes over a selection of the very best copies of this disc, that track was ready for the editor to piece those precious bits together, with only de-clicking being between that and the sound to be stored on the compact disc. There is no filtering, equalisation, compression, boost or any other changes done to the result coming out of 'Big Bertha', not is it necessary, so that performances of the great artists of the past have as natural a passage as is possible to our ears. Believe me, those voices I heard that day were very human indeed.

The Ambisonic microphones are placed on axis with the horn, at a distance of some six feet away from the bell. A very forward recording in the 78 record required that the microphone trolley would be moved back.

The original 78rpm copies are almost all collected from specialist dealers in America, and Norman tells me that he sifts through some 250,000 discs on a visit over there. For each track on a proposed CD, as many copies are chosen as possible and up to ten copies purchased. On return to this country these are carefully listened to on the EMG and critical remarks made on each one, noting blasts, blisters, swishes and ticks. From this group of original records (which are all superb copies) perhaps only six of them are chosen to be played on 'Big Bertha'. During my day there, I heard Farrar, Jacoby, Scotti and Caruso, during the preparation of a new CD called *Geraldine Farrar in Italian Opera*.

After the transfers of the day were finished, I asked if I could hear a disc of my own, so as to get some comparison with my own

EMG Mk10; this was my very special *O Isis und Osiris* from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, sung by Oscar Natzke, the New Zealand bass and recorded in January 1938 just after Natzke had finished his training. It is on Parlophone E11423. My wish was granted, and as I sat in the hall for the first time to hear 'Big Bertha' directly (during the transfers, only Norman was in the actual room with Bertha) I was at first struck by the small volume which the 'Great lady' emitted. One must remember that although she is rather large, she has no amplification whatever and must be compared in that, to a normal wind up gramophone of the domestic kind. Although the sound was small in so large a hall, it was incredibly clean, pure and complete. It was just amazing.

I was not aware that Dominic had heard it, but on entering the control room after the record was finished, there was Oscar's wonderful voice coming from DAT through the monitor speakers, with its amazing richness and power. There is no way I can describe the sound coming out of that system. Norman was impressed and asked if he might sometime in the future borrow my copy for transfer. Of course I agreed.

My visit was complete and I left Monmouth with a wonderfully elated feeling but wondering if I could do this article justice.

Before leaving I was kindly presented with their very latest CD in the Prima Voce Series, called *Legendary Tenors*, and contains the great names recorded between 1903 (Tamagno) and 1944 (Jussi Björling). I have now listened to this disc and although I am delighted with it, after hearing the sounds emitted from their monitors back in Monmouth, it makes me realise that it is not the 78rpm records that are at a loss, but my CD system.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who made my visit to Nimbus possible, especially Norman White, Chris Hamilton and Alf Goodrich.

HOW BERLINER MADE RECORDINGS IN 1888

by George Taylor

On May 16 1888 Emile Berliner unveiled the infant gramophone to an audience of savants of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia (ref 1).

The Institute had received notice of Berliner's work on the gramophone in November 1887. Berliner himself had not been invited to speak, but the progress of his developments was described by Professor E. J. Houston (ref. 2). It is quite clear that Berliner had made great progress between late 1887 and the spring of 1888; whereas the previous meeting had been largely concerned with principles and a resumé of Berliner's patent (ref 3), Berliner was himself able to demonstrate actual records at the 1888 meeting. This article describes how those records were made, and some of the developments leading up to their demonstration.

It should be recalled that in 1887, the world at large was familiar only with the crudities of the tin-foil phonograph and the early form of the Bell and Tainter graphophones. Edison may well have been working on improvements; but at this date, there was considerable incentive to devise a more effective recording process and playback machine. Houston's address described the limitations of the tin-foil phonograph and also of the hill-and-dale recording process itself in the contemporary view. How could recording fidelity be achieved by a process in which the recording stylus indented a yielding surface, where the resistance of the surface recorded on increases with the increasing amplitude of the motion of the recording stylus? How indeed - but see the appendix. Berliner provided the answer, at

least in theory: record the sound vibrations laterally, in a medium providing a negligible resistance to the stylus. This principle had been used for thirty years in the Scott phonautograph; record on a smooth hard surface coated with lampblack. Berliner remarks in his patent "that in place of a material such as tin foil, which is objectionable on account of the resistance it offers to the tracing point attached to the diaphragm, there is employed a surface that offers but little resistance to such movements".

The early experiments were made by recording on a strip of material coated with lampblack and wrapped around a drum. He then devised a machine to record on a rotating glass disc; a diagram of this is given in ref 2. He fixed the recording by "flowing with quick drying varnish" (not applied with a brush, as this would destroy the recording). He had evidently produced disc recordings in 1887, as not only is his disc recording machine illustrated but a segment of a record showing the lateral trace is also shown. For producing playable records, he had several possibilities in mind:

- (1) a copy in metal by the purely mechanical process of engraving
- (2) a copy by chemical deposition
- (3) a copy by photo-engraving. The latter process is preferred by the inventor".

Apparently, playable records **were** produced by this third process (ref 4).

So much for 1887. In 1888, progress was rapid, and in May, Berliner was invited to speak at the Franklin Institute and demon-

strate some records Berliner started by reviewing the development of the talking machine to date, paying particular homage to Charles Cros, with whose work he had just become acquainted; indeed Cros' process was the Mark 1 Berliner process using photo-engraving to produce a playable record. Berliner was generous; he stated that "to Mr Charles Cros belongs the honour of having first suggested the idea of, and feasible plan for, mechanically reproducing speech once uttered". He went on to outline the limitations of the hill-and-dale process as used by Edison and Bell and Tainter (he was familiar with their 1886 patent (ref 5)). He proceeded to describe his own method of recording and producing playable records.

At this time, illustrations were often printed from etched metal plates. The plate was coated with an oily resist and the design was inscribed in this, exposing the bare metal, producing a groove to take the printing ink. Berliner's particular advance was in achieving a sharply defined recording trace and an improved acid etching process. Here is his 1888 process.

1. Preparing the plate

In etching, both copper and zinc plates were used, and Berliner selected zinc because it was easier to obtain flat plates in this metal. In the phonautograph, a smoked surface was used; but Berliner found that his recording trace was ragged and saw-toothed at the edges. If the plate was first oiled with something such as printer's ink before smoking, the recorded trace was much sharper and cleaner. The problem remained to obtain a resist giving negligible impedance to the recording stylus, but strong enough to resist the etching acid; this problem haunted Berliner and was the main reason why he initially went for the photographic process. After some experimentation, he found that an etching ground based on beeswax gave a sharp trace and

good acid resistance. Yellow beeswax (one ounce) was digested in benzine or gasoline (one pint). The clear yellow liquid was decanted from the insoluble material. The solution was then flowed over the zinc plate "as if I would coat with collodion". Generally, two coats were applied, giving a fragile spongy film. To render the film visible so that recordings could be examined if necessary, Berliner occasionally smoked the wax film by holding the plate high above burning camphor.

2. Recording

The 1887 recording machine (using glass discs) was weight driven; it is illustrated in ref 2. Whether the 1888 machine was also weight driven is not clear; unfortunately the machine is not illustrated in the paper (ref 1). Here is what Berliner says after describing the recording sound-box: "The whole is mounted on a sliding carriage, which is driven by clock-work across the disk, while the latter revolves at the rate of about thirty revolutions per minute". Did clock-work merely refer to a system of gearing? "The recording machine demonstrated by Berliner in 1888" is illustrated in ref 6. here, the recording head is indeed traversed across the disc by means of a screw mechanism, but the whole apparatus is hand-cranked. There is no evidence of a clock-work motor.

The artist (Berliner himself in the early days) performed into a small horn attached by flexible tubing to the recording head. A difficulty, apparently unsurmountable, arose from particles of dust in the air and in the wax accumulating around the stylus - as well as particles of the wax itself. The difficulty was finally overcome by dripping alcohol onto the recording surface, this keeping the stylus perfectly clean.

The recording head itself was of sophisticated design, and Berliner had given considerable thought to the problem of damping unwanted vibrations; details of the design are given in his paper.

3. Etching

Various acids were used in the etching trade, and Berliner tried several of these. When zinc reacts with many acids, hydrogen is formed and accumulates in bubbles. In normal etching, these bubbles were brushed away with a feather or some such; but Berliner's fragile wax coating would not stand this. He had to find an etching medium which would not result in bubble formation. Bichromate of soda was added to the acid in galvanic batteries of the period to eliminate the bubble problem. This approach seemed to work with Berliner's nitric acid etching system, but so much bichromate had to be added that he finally thought the chromic acid by itself would work. Indeed, a chromic acid solution gave a sharp and clearly cut line on the zinc, and no bubbles. The back of the plate had been coated with varnish or beeswax to protect it. Fifteen or twenty minutes in a solution of one part chromic acid in three parts water produced a groove of sufficient depth. If necessary, the groove could be subsequently deepened by using another well-established etching trick; the surface of the etched plate was brushed with resin dust and heated over a flame. The resin adhered preferentially to the high ridges and was a robust acid resist. Further etching was then done using nitric acid and a feather could safely be used to brush away the hydrogen bubbles. If Berliner used this second procedure, it suggests that his chromic acid primary system was, at least at this period, of somewhat marginal efficiency.

4. Playback

The playback machine is shown in both refs 1 and 6. Playback of the record was by means of a sound-box of the same general design as the recording head, but of somewhat smaller dimensions and of much less sensitivity to vibrations (damping again?). The stylus was tipped with iridium to prevent abrasion by the record groove -

much as contemporary pen nibs were coated to minimise wear. The sound-box was guided across the disc by the stylus in the groove.

At the Franklin Institute, Berliner demonstrated some records that he had made on a machine completed only in the previous ten days, and also, it seems, made a record and etched it on the spot - courageous! What did these records sound like? Well, at least the recording was recognisable, if somewhat limited in fidelity, if anything like the 1890 records reproduced on Peter Adamson's Symposium CD 1058. There was obviously a lot of surface noise and indeed, this was one of the main attractions of the later use of wax recording blanks rather than the metal/acid system. And if indeed the 1888 recording **was** done on five inch discs at only thirty revolutions per minute, what chance hi-fi? Still, a start had been made and a new industry had been born.

References

- 1) E. Berliner, *The Gramophone:Etching the Human Voice*, J Franklin Inst. Vol. CXXV
- 2) E. J. Houston, *The Gramophone*, J. Franklin Inst. Vol. CXXV (1888) 44-45
- 3) E. Berliner, *U S P 372,786*, 8th Nov. 1887
- 4) P. G. Adamson, *Berliner Discs: from toys to celebrity records*, Edison Phonograph Centenary Symposium, Edinburgh, 1977, pp 73-91
- 5) C. A. Bell and C. S. Tainter, *U S P 341,214*, 4th May 1886
- 6) V. K. Chew, *Talking Machines*, 2nd ed. 1981, pp 18, 19

Acknowledgement

I am indebted to Paul Cleary for bringing the Franklin Institute papers to my attention, and supplying me with photocopies.

Appendix.

Hill-and-Dale versus Lateral Recording

The hill-and-dale method of recording, according to Joe Pengelly "always embraced a wider frequency spectrum than was obtainable by contemporary lateral cut" and that "had Caruso recorded on Blue Amberol cylinder(s), then this would have preserved his legacy in far better form than his lateral cut discs." I am quite prepared to believe, therefore, that the sound quality on vertical cut records should be better than laterals, particularly after hearing Edison's recordings of Rachmaninov in 1919 and popular stuff of the 1920s.

However, Berliner's argument in favour of lateral cut seemed incontrovertible to me. How did Berliner and I get it wrong?

Acknowledgement

Joe Pengelly, *The Electrical Reproduction of Cylinders*, Edison Phonograph Centenary Symposium, Edinburgh, 1977, pp 57-59

Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

April 21st	Norman White from Nimbus Records will let us hear some of the latest re-issues in Nimbus' <i>Prima Voce</i> Series of CDs
May 19th	<i>The Remastering Voice</i> - Andrew Walter of EMI will talk about his work on transferring 78rpm recordings to CD
June 16th	Bridget Duckenfield, the author of <i>O Lovely Knight</i> , will talk on <i>The Many Sides of Landon Ronald</i>
July 21st	<i>A Demonstration of World Records</i> by Frank Andrews & George Woolford on original equipment
August 18th	Allen Debus from the U.S.A. Details to be announced later
September 15th	George Glastris. Details to be announced later
October 20th	George Woolford on <i>1905 and Patti</i>
November 17th	Joe Pengelly will talk about his latest design of cylinder playing machine and let us hear some of the cylinders he has transcribed to tape using this machine
December 15th	Geoff Edwards. Details to be announced later

WAS FRANK LAMBERT FIRST? (A Challenge to Charles Cros)

by Aaron Cramer

The name Frank Lambert had been known to a very few until recently. Any mention of his name brought out the usual response: "Didn't he make those bright pink cylinders?" That of course was Thomas Lambert. Perhaps in questioning a more advanced collector you might learn that Frank was the inventor of the typewriter that gave The Gramophone Co. its expanded name, Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. (from 1900 to 1907). But surprisingly he was also connected with recorded sound - perhaps even before Charles Cros!

Now thanks to good fortune, dedicated research and the efforts of many good friends, that has all changed. The name Frank Lambert is now in the *1994 Guinness Book of Records*, and *The Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the U.S.* He's credited with making the **oldest playable record**.

The Ansonia Clock Co. entered into an agreement with Thomas Edison on January 7th 1878 to produce a phonograph to make permanent recordings that could be installed in talking clocks. I'm in possession of a letter from the Ansonia Clock Co. to Thomas Edison written on February 5th 1878 describing aspects of the machine and their success in engraving on metal using a recorder. Their description fits details on the machine I now own. Frank Lambert worked for one of Edison's licensees for talking clocks, and had a close association with the Ansonia Clock Company, a Brooklyn, N.Y. based company I might add. Frank shared several patents with them and had other close associates in that company, Henry J. Davies, Daniel M. Somers, Eugene Pastre and others.

It would be because of this agreement with Edison that Lambert was called as a witness on Edison's behalf in 1896 for the case of the American Graphophone Co. vs Edison. This is where some strange statements were made that warrant a good deal of more research. Perhaps our European collectors may have greater access to the necessary information regarding these statements.

The statements in the sworn testimony that are highly intriguing are when Frank Lambert answers to the question, "Is it not a fact that you yourself made

and used at least one talking machine fifteen years ago or longer, in which the sound was recorded by cutting or engraving upon a solid metal body of material?" Frank answers "As far back as 1871 I made experiments of the same nature." At first I thought the 1871 was a misprint; however Frank then goes on to use that 1871 date four more times. I would say five times in sworn testimony is too much to be a misprint.

Here is some additional testimony from that trial that I feel has a direct connection to the Lambert phonograph:

Question: "In 1879 or earlier you fitted up a lathe and recorded and reproduced speech on that lathe?"

Answer: "Yes, sir."

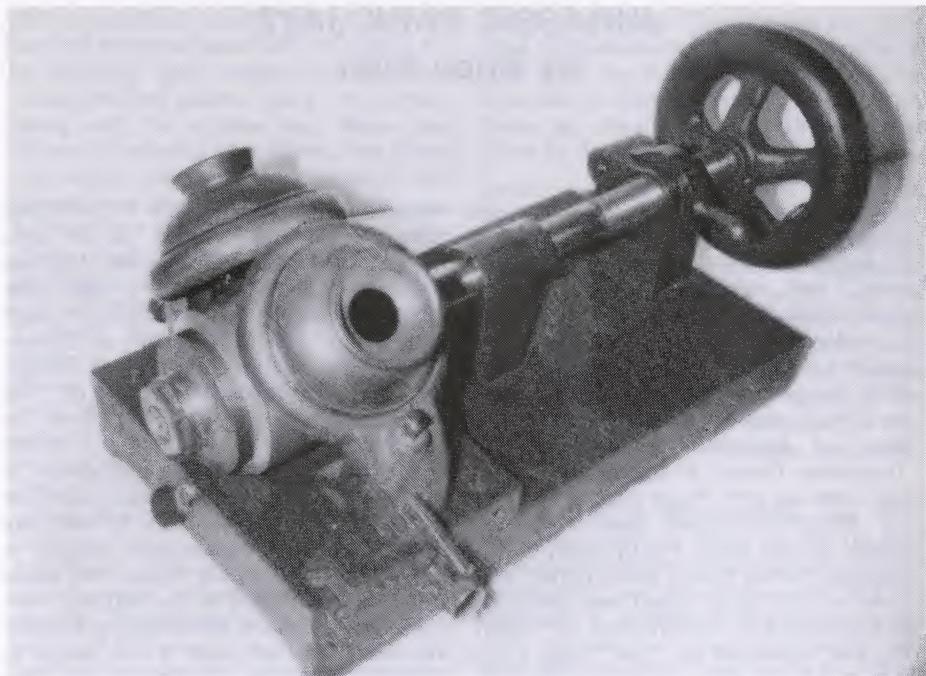
Question: "Did you subsequently build a complete talking machine embodying the features you had worked on the lathe?"

Answer: "The lathe by itself was a complete talking machine, and afterwards I built a special machine which in function was exactly as same as a lathe."

I have to say when I first saw this device amongst Lambert's other experimental models I thought it was a miniature lathe. Of course seeing the speakers immediately dispelled that notion.

So the mystery we have is this: Here is Frank Lambert living in Brest, France in 1871 and working on a talking machine - the same Frank Lambert who seven years later in less than a month's time produces a machine with a heretofore unknown permanent engraved record. Is that possible? Was he perhaps working with Léon Scott de Martinville on the Phonograph, or is a connection to be found with Charles Cros? Maybe our European friends can help to rewrite history!

More on this subject can be seen in *APM Vol. X No.3 issue No.87*. A copy can be sent airmail for a dollar bill or 2 IR coupons by contacting *Antique Phonograph Monthly*, 502 East 17th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226, U.S.A.



Aaron Cramer's Lambert Phonograph

C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

Item B 222 *Hand Cranked Phonographs - It all started with Edison* by Neil Makin. An excellent book for the beginner and the experienced with much useful information. Price £12 including U. K. postage.

Item B 223 *Phono-Graphics* by Arnold Schwatzman. Beautifully photographed this book is a real treat. The first copies sold out in minutes at the AGM and phonofair at Walsall in September 1993. Don't miss out this time! Price £15 including U. K. postage.

All available (foreign orders please add 10%) from the address listed below:

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Lincolnshire LN7 6RX

JURASSIC PARK JAZZ

by Brian Rust

Dinosaurs seem to be the "in" things just now, and I can understand why they should be especially among pre-teenage children; when I was eight there was a series of photographic cards issued with Army Club cigarettes, and with the selfless help of the smokers in my family, I managed to complete two sets, one large, one small. After the thrill of getting a realistic-looking photograph of *Iguanodon Bernissartensis* or *Triceratops Prorsus* to complete, however, had faded as such things must at that age, my affections turned towards the old dance records given me by kindly neighbours and family friends, among which were some very old items indeed (well, they were at least twelve or thirteen years old THEN). But they fascinated me....and though out of these relics has grown my lifelong appreciation of real jazz, the sound of small bands that played, or thought they played it while the Original Dixieland Jazz Band were appearing in London, leaving a hiatus in America that many were rushing to fill, still fascinates me. Some of it, of course, is too Jurassic even for my taste (I'm thinking especially of the four sides on Edison Bell Winner made by Murray Pilcer's Jazz Band early in 1919, before anyone in England could have heard real jazz), but much of it stands comparison with what has been accepted as small-band jazz recorded anything up to a decade or so later.

Of all the bands that recorded and were issued in America in 1919 and 1920, the one most closely approaching the superb cohesion and attack of the ODJB was the New Orleans Jazz Band, which made two sides for Okeh and two for Gennett in the

weeks following the Armistice of 1918 (and even then, one was repeated - *Ja Da* - but I know of no version of this standard that can match what Jimmy Durante's great little quintet did with it). The recording in each case is not as good as Victor's or Columbia's, but the feeling for jazz comes through from the word go and never lets up. The solitary Gennett title, *Why Cry Blues*, by substantially the same band for Gennett about eighteen months later somehow is rather lack-lustre; what else was made that day, I wonder? The reverse, *Old Man Jazz* by Saxy Holtsworth's Harmony Hounds, is as painful as the Murray Pilcers, the whole side being dominated by the laughing trombone and Holtsworth himself doing a feeble impression of Ted Lewis. It was issued in England, of course. I gather from other sides by this or a very similar band under Saxy Holtsworth's name on Emerson that they are similar.

The ODJB's successors may be regarded as the Louisiana Five, who recorded quite a number of sides in 1919 for Columbia, Edison and Emerson between them. Only on one is a cornet present, and what a difference it makes! Alcide Nunez, the clarinettist, had preceded Larry Shields in the ODJB, but while he was fluent and had a lovely tone, he had very restricted ideas, and seems to be content to follow the score as written while Charlie Panelli provides a simple counterpoint. This would be much more effective if he had a cornetist to play to. On *Slow and Easy* he gets one - and transforms the band into something of real jazz value.

Only a couple of months later, Nunez was present on some dates with the Happy Six, a recording band directed by drummer/xylophonist/bell-soloist Harry A. Yerkes, along with his ex-boss and fellow New Orleans trombonist Tom Brown. The Happy Six did not have a static personnel; from time to time their personnel included such saxophonists as Rudy Wiedoeft and Bert Ralton, their trumpets could be Earl Oliver or Clarence Grancy, the latter playing some vigorous trumpet on the Six's record *Dance-O-Mania*. From his own account, Tom Brown is present on most, if not all the Yerkes records made between 1919 and 1923. Yerkes, being by the early twenties a power in the land of Columbia, was present on his Columbia dates in the capacity of an active conductor, but he managed many groups that recorded for other labels, some using his name. A Yerkes band of obvious importance, however, appears on Columbia as "Gorman's Novelty Syncopators". Ross Gorman, multi-instrumentalist and later to join Paul Whiteman, plays clarinet on *Barking Dog*, the only title issued, but the brass section of Clarence Grancy on cornet and Keith Pitman on trombone, shows a complete understanding of small-band jazz playing that was rare indeed in those days. Eddie Grossbart was the drummer, and four months later, he was in London with the All American Five. (He never returned in a professional capacity.) By the end of 1920, Grancy and Pitman were both in London also, as members of Art Hickman's New York London Five, playing in the Italian Roof Garden above the Criterion Theatre, and recording some mellow strongly jazz-orientated dance music for HMV.

Having lost Grossbart, it seems that the Gorman band recorded two titles for Paramount in the early summer of 1920 with no drummer at all. They were labelled as "The White Way Jazz Band", and their *Tiger Rag* is remarkable in that it is the only recorded version I know from which the familiar "tiger

roars" are omitted. Nevertheless the complete comprehension of what constituted a good jazz performance, noticed on the Columbia of *Barking Dog*, is apparent on these two Paramount sides (the other is *Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me*).

Before crossing the Atlantic eastwards, mention should be made of the Synco Jazz Band, whose one issued side (*Breeze*) on Columbia also shows a sense of integration and a certain mellowness (which may be due to the recording technique). Their contemporary records for Pathé, and slightly later sides for Okeh as the Tampa Blue Jazz Band, have a tendency for shrillness especially on the part of the gaspipe-clarinettist Joe Samuels, who dominates everything.

When the ODJB left England in July 1920, they left a vacancy that only the Durante band or the Gorman group could have filled successfully; but American pianist Billy Arnold and a quintet of musicians playing more or less the same instruments tried their best to follow. They made four sides for HMV, all rejected, and two for Columbia, which, though issued, hardly suggest that here was a band able to carry on the good work of the ODJB. A ragged ensemble, edgy unrelaxed phrasing especially by the trumpet and a rather curious sense of pitch are so much at variance with all that the Dixielanders stood for, it is not surprising that their time in London was relatively brief. At least Columbia showed us how the Arnold band sounded; HMV recorded other bands in that same year 1920, without issuing even one title. How, we wonder, did the Ragpickers sound on the four titles they made over two sessions that spring? Were the Red Devils who made four HMV sides on September 1st 1920 as interesting on record as they appear to have been on the stand - whether Sidney Bechet was with them or not? (He wouldn't have been present on the records, would he? Would he?)

Despite earlier rumours and flat statements, Bechet was NOT with the Southern Rag-a-Jazz Band on Edison Bell Winner in 1921; although American visitors, their efforts are really rather dreadful, being dominated by a soprano sax suggesting Ted Lewis at his worst.

One solitary side credited to the Wild West Jazz Band graced the Zonophone catalogues from the spring of 1920, but let no-one suppose this to be anything like what its label may suggest. The title is *Dardanella*, and without hearing it, Sandy Forbes and I rather rashly supposed it to be crude attempt to cash in on the popularity of jazz (meaning any dance music not of obviously pre-1914 origin) by concealing the regular Zonophone house unit, the Black Diamonds Band. To be fair, that is partly true - except that clearly audible are a banjo and a tenor saxophone, neither of which is a regular part of the Black Diamonds. Bill Triggs suggested strongly that the banjoist was Emil Grimshaw, which in turn suggested to me that the tenor player was Dick Langham, of the Savoy Dance Orchestra that made two sides issued on Columbia about that time, and was also with the West End Dance Quartet that made three HMVs (rejected, of course) the following September. Incidentally, I wonder who constituted Sherbo's American band that made three HMVs (rejected, of course) three weeks later?

The Zonophone lists of 1919 show four titles issued as by the Manhattan Jazz Band, but there is no jazz among them. They may have been made by members of the house band creating as much mayhem as they could, in the commonly-held belief that such indicated the quintessence of jazz; it is of little consequence now, some 75 years later.

To be fair to HMV, though, praise must be awarded in the case of two titles by Jack Hylton and the "Queen's" Dance Orchestra, issued on B 1236 (*Turque*) and B 1299 (*The Bull-Frog Patrol*). On both these, Edmund Jenkins plays some beautiful typical Dixieland clarinet; the whole band sounds relaxed and as if it was enjoying what it was doing. (*Turque*, by the way, was composed by Paul Wyer and Pierre de Caillaux, both late of the Southern Syncopated Orchestra.)

Then came the dawn, with King Oliver, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, the Wolverines, Jelly-Roll Morton, Jimmy Blythe, Clarence Williams....and all the myriads we have loved for decades. Yet out of the prehistoric age have come the records I have mentioned, all well worth while additions to any collection (with exceptions as noted, of course) - and by some standards, not impossibly expensive.

HELP!

For some time now, Bill Triggs and I have been working on a combined Vocalion matrix listing, covering as much as we possibly can of all records made in New York and London between 1917 and 1927. To do this accurately, and presentably, we need to have details of EVERY record made by this most interesting company, no matter how limited its interest (we have the "Brunswick" products of 1925 onwards, but need the British recordings from beginning to end). We are also covering the British labels, pressed by Vocalion such as: Aco, Beltona, Citizen, Coliseum, Duophone, Guardsman, Homochord, Ludgate, Meloto, Scala and Tower. Especially urgently wanted are fullest details of vertical-cut Aeolian Vocalions of 1917-1919. The matrix number is there if only you can see it! (Usually under the left-hand segment of the label design).

Will you please help us? We've covered so much ground; just a little further to go, and we'll be there - so dig out those ornate Vocalions and let us know what you've found.

Brian Rust, The Moorings, [REDACTED] Swanage, Dorset SH19 1LN.

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A VISIT TO ABBEY ROAD

by Chris Hamilton

During March this year I was invited to EMI Records Ltd.'s studios at Abbey Road, St.John's Wood, London to meet Andrew Walter. Andrew is one of a small team of specialists, who transfer historic recordings from 78s to CD. Andrew specialises in the field of classical music while his colleagues concentrate on popular music like dance bands and jazz. Andrew Walter has a classical music background as he was a pupil at Winchester Cathedral Choir School under Martin Neary. In his brief time with EMI Records Andrew has had quite a number of CDs issued of his work. Most notable of these are the three volumes of *The Elgar Edition*, in which most of the electrical recordings which Sir Edward Elgar made of his own works on HMV are re-issued. EMI received a *Gramophone Recording of the Year* award for one of these volumes.

I have long been interested in the ways and means of transferring old recordings to modern carriers of recorded music like CD because it offers the collector a chance to purchase recordings that are no longer available in their original form. The original discs of many of these recordings are scarce to find in the second-hand market and thanks to people like Andrew the collector can listen to them at home in a good quality (often excellent) sound on modern equipment. In many cases the sound is better than what is be retrieved from contemporary reproduction equipment.

Andrew uses an EMT 16" diameter turntable, which is over thirty years old. It has a SME type 12" arm to which EMI have added their own specially designed counter-weight. Stanton 500 cartridges fixed to detachable headshells are used. A large range of these with different sizes of styli are kept to cover as many different sizes of record groove as possible. Lexicon digital equipment is used for analogue to digital and digital to analogue conversion. EMI's own design

of amplifier along with a Quad 44 pre-amplifier; Sony DAT (Digital Audio Tape) recorders; B&W 801 monitor speakers and an IBM PC with CEDAR circuitry built in complete the equipment used by Andrew for his transfer work.

To demonstrate his equipment Andrew played me a record of Solomon performing Chopin's *Mazurka in A minor Op.68 No.2*. A metal positive of the recording was loaded onto the EMT turntable and Andrew played it first without any CEDAR. I was impressed by the life-like sound and low surface noise. Andrew then switched in the CEDAR circuits and the music came through loud and clear with little or no surface noise. I felt I was right in the studio listening to Solomon live! Andrew swapped the metal positive for the commercial pressing on HMV C3509 and then let me hear that. The sound was very similar but the surface noise was rather more severe. This is not surprising considering the poor quality of shellac used by EMI at the time! The CEDAR circuits were then switched in again and Andrew had to introduce quite a bit more filtering to remove the extra surface noise. This could not be eliminated totally without spoiling the sound. In spite of a continual hiss in the background the sound emanating from the speakers was still quite respectable and life-like. A couple of dance band recordings from the 1950s (which had been mastered on tape) were then played using CEDAR. The sound was far better than what I could have obtained on my own equipment at home.

Andrew obviously enjoyed his work and his skill in obtaining the best out of these old recordings was quite evident. Readers can hear the results for themselves on May 19th 1994 at the National Sound Archive when Andrew comes to our monthly meeting to talk about his work and let us hear some of his transfers.

PHONOVISION

by Doug Pitt

(Chairman of the Narrow Bandwidth TeleVision Association)

In a recent edition of *Hillendale News* (No.195 December 1993) a reference was made by Martyn Dowell, in his letter, to Phonovision records. There appears to be some confusion about their nature, so the following notes may be of interest.

Phonovision was the name applied by John Logie Baird to the first attempts to record his very simple TV pictures. At first he used a recording turntable linked directly by a gear train to the scanning disc of a mechanical TV camera.

Records made in this way (very rare), if held obliquely to a source of light, show the disc to be divided into a precise number of equal-angle sectors, each sector representing a single 'frame' of the moving picture information.

Later recordings (circa 1928-32) were made without mechanical linkage and the light pattern exhibited is more random. Normal lateral modulation of the groove was employed.

Later records issued by F. Plew of London W1 consisted of 12 minutes of still pictures and captions (6 minutes each side) but, as far as I know, no moving pictures. They were sold for 10 shillings each, a lot of money in 1934-35, for the purpose of demonstrating and testing TV receivers during the period when no programmes were being broadcast (i.e. 23½ hours per day!)

Only two different recordings, called simply *One* and *Two* were issued, but probably in fairly large numbers. There were possibly half a dozen different recordings from the Baird studios.

Playing a record of this sort requires special processing and display apparatus such as only active members of the Narrow Bandwidth TV Association are likely to possess.

The picture produced had little in common with a modern TV image of 625 horizontal lines, scanned vertically upwards. The picture had a 'tall' shape, 7 units high by 3 units wide, against the modern 'wide' image of 3 by 4.

Few phonovision records have survived with much useful information on them.

Just three playings of a shellac record with a steel needle is enough to remove most of its high frequencies, and the eye registers such losses far more critically than the ear. However, visitors to the TV Museum in Bradford can see a short glimpse of some recorded moving images which have been reconstructed through highly sophisticated digital techniques by Mr Don McLean, an expert in image enhancement.

The portrait shown here gives some idea of the definition obtained by the techniques of the 1930s, using modern 'replica' apparatus.

Genuine Phonovision records are of 12" diameter with a label bearing the name 'Baird' or 'Mastervision' (Plew).



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MORE PERSONALITIES BEHIND THE NAMES ON THE LABELS - Part 6

by Frank Andrews

No.38 Hubert Eisdell (tenor)

was born in Hampstead, Middlesex on September 21st 1882 and, after being educated at an English Public School, he went on to become a student at Caius College, Cambridge where he gained his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1904 and where he held a musical exhibition for four years. His singing teacher was Mr Victor Beigel. However his working life began in Toronto, Canada where he went into education as a science teacher.

Back in England his first professional engagement was as a tenor at one of Messrs. Chappell & Co.'s Ballad Concerts, in London's Queen's Hall in 1909. He was re-engaged every year thereafter, at least until the outbreak of war in August 1914.

Amongst other activities, he was engaged for a Liza Lehmann tour in the United States and Canada, and he sang before King George V at a Royal Amateur Orchestral Society Concert in 1913. Eisdell also held a commission in the Royal Naval Volunteers.

His only recordings, as far as I am aware, came on Columbia and HMV, in this country.

No.39 Gervase Elwes (tenor)

another tenor, was born on November 15th 1866 at Belling in Northamptonshire. He was the son of Valentine Cory Elwes and his wife, Alice, the daughter of the Honourable Reverend Henry Ward, who was the brother of Edward, Viscount Bangor. Gervase was educated in Birmingham, at the Oratory School, going up to Christ College, Oxford, afterwards.

In May 1889 he married Lady Winifred Fielding, the daughter of the Earl of Den-

bigh, that same gentleman who later had strict orders to see that Queen Victoria's cylinder recorded message to the Emperor of Abyssinia was destroyed after the Emperor had listened to it.

From 1891 to 1895 Elwes served in the British Diplomatic Service and whilst on duties in Vienna he studied harmony with Mandyczewski. In Brussels he prepared himself for a career in music under a M. Demest, continuing his tuition under M. Bouchy in Paris and under Henry Russell and Victor Beigel in London.

His first appearance in public took place in 1903, as principal tenor, at the Westmorland Festival, held at Kendal in the Lake District. After his performances there he was in great demand throughout our major cities and at other musical festivals.

In February 1904 he sang before King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in Windsor Castle and later sang before the Queen again, in the same year, at Leighton House, Holland Park Road, London, the home of Lord Leighton. The Joachim Quartet also took part in the concert.

A tour with Fanny Davies, the pianist and former pupil of Clara Schumann, took him to Berlin, Leipzig, Munich and Frankfurt in 1907.

He was engaged by the New York Oratorio Society, in 1909, to sing Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* (a rôle he had sung over seventy times at various venues by 1914) and to sing in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. Whilst in America he sang in Boston and in Philadelphia. He sang again in *Gerontius* for the New York Oratorio Society in 1914. He also went to Amsterdam and Frankfurt to take part in *St. Matthew Passion* again.

Back in America in 1921, he was killed by a railroad train at a station in Boston, Mass. A 'Gervase Elwes Fund' was set up to perpetuate his memory. This fund eventually became the basis for the present 'Musicians' Benevolent Fund'.

His recordings appeared on the Columbia and HMV labels.

No.40 Richard Epstein (pianist)

was born on January 26th 1869 in Vienna. He studied under his father, Julius Epstein, at the Vienna Conservatoire. For theory he was taught by Robert Fuchs. He then spent another two years studying in Berlin and Dresden. He was later appointed a professor at the Vienna Conservatoire.

He came to Britain circa 1904-5 and played here as a soloist at concerts. On one occasion he played with Dr Hans Richter conducting. He was known mainly for his work as an accompanist to other artists.

He once made the claim to have been the first to introduce the work of a Moravian composer to an audience, when he played the piano part in a trio, composed by the sixteen-year-old Erich Wolfgang Korngold. This was the same Korngold who finished his days in California in 1957 after composing much music for the Hollywood film industry.

Epstein recorded for the Odeon label and also for the Gramophone Company and is found on Gramophone Monarch Records.

No.41 Clifford Essex (banjo)

William James Clifford Essex was born on July 12th 1885 and died on February 2nd 1946. He is not known to have made any commercial disc records nor, for that matter, any in cylinder form, although a recording in duet with Sydney Turner and entitled *A Bunch of Rags* has been reported by those banjo players, but the form it took is unknown. However, the name of Clifford Essex gives me the opportunity to bring to

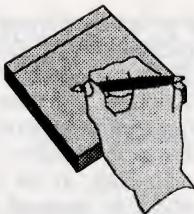
the notice of members and readers the publication, by Greenwood Press of *The Banjo on Record - A Bio-Discography*, edited by Uli Heier and Rainer E. Lotz. It has 597 pages from which I have culled the Essex information. The book covers banjo recordings in all its aspects. The whole world is covered, with 'pen portraits' of many of the artists and with recording dates given, where known. catalogue numbers, and matrix numbers, the latter also where known, are given, as also are pseudonyms. There is a ten-page bibliography and 31 pages of a titles index, with three columns to a page. I do not know how to get this book in the U.K. but I am sure that anyone interested will get help from Rainer E. Lotz at [REDACTED] 53173 Bonn 2, Germany.

To return to Clifford Essex, and ignoring my own reference to him, and to give you an idea of what one can expect from the banjo discography, we learn that Essex learned to play the piano at 5 years old, but turned to the banjo and joined the *Pierrot Banjo Team* in the late 1890s. This became the *Clifford Essex Royal Pierrots* and it was with this team that we come across the names of other banjoists who recorded, such as Will C. Pepper, Joe Morley, Bert Bassett, Master Charlie Rogers and Sydney Turner.

He began organising concerts in London in 1891, which carried on for 30 years. In 1901 he went into partnership with another recording banjoist, Alfred Cammeyer and then started his own business as *Clifford Essex* in 1903 quickly becoming the leading firm in the manufacture of banjos. In the same year he published the first issue of *The Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Monthly* (B.M.G.) magazine.

As with John Pidoux, another banjoist, it may be that Essex made his own cylinder recordings, to study his own technique and sound quality.

LETTERS



Photograph of Thomas A. Edison

Dear Mr Hamilton,

Over Christmas, I found time to read *Recollections of Thomas A. Edison* by A. F. Wagner, published by the Society and Symposium Records. This was especially of interest to me, as in 1960 my father acquired a 1927 "Schubert" Edison disc phonograph and some diamond discs (mainly of Grand Opera), which had actually belonged to Mr Wagner. I imagine that the machine had remained in the Edison offices in Wardour Street when the music phonograph business ceased in 1929. It later passed to Mr Wagner's secretary, Miss Dorothy A. Brown, from whom my father purchased it.

Just before Thomas A. Edison Ltd. totally ceased trading in Britain in 1965, my father also acquired from their then premises at Victoria House, Southampton Row, Holborn, a large framed photograph. This shows an uncharacteristically kempt Mr Edison, and at the bottom left hand corner is inscribed: "To Horace F. Panshall from Thomas A. Edison, Orange N. J., Jan. 11 1905". I had always assumed that the recipient of this hand signed photograph must have been an earlier manager of the London Office. Wagner's account shows however, that this was not so.

I wonder therefore whether any well informed reader could tell me who Horace Panshall might have been, and suggest how the photograph found its way to the London office in the last days in 1965.

Yours sincerely,

Norman Carreck, Henfield West Sussex

Production dates of gramophones

Dear Chris,

Mr Hammond asks, in December's *Hillendale News*, for the cut-off dates for production of certain acoustic gramophones. To provide such dates would involve extensive research in the factory records of the companies concerned, which may not survive complete, even at EMI. In any case, it is not **production** dates that are relevant so much as catalogue dates. Many models remained in the catalogue after production had ceased, until stocks were used up. Even to find these dates requires careful research through all catalogues, of which there would be several editions each year.

From catalogues, I have available, I can tell Mr Hammond the following, on HMV models:

The 126 (introduced October 1925) was replaced in the course of 1927, between March and September, by the very similar 127, which in turn disappeared in the course of 1930, after it had effectively been replaced by the 130, introduced late in 1929.

The 162 was one of a short-lived range, introduced probably in October 1926 and still listed in November 1927, but already superceded by the 163 introduced in the previous month: production would have already ceased. I cannot find a reference to the cut-off date for the 202, but it was probably in 1931.

The 99 portable ran from October 1931 to, probably, September 1935, when it was replaced by the 97. This model was displayed at the Olympia show referred to by Mr Hammond: it was referred to in a report on the show in *The Gramophone*.

The 102 was introduced at the same time as the 99, but remained in production well into the 1950s. It was still available in 1960. It replaced the 101 (introduced late 1926), but whether the 101 was deleted immediately or continued to be officially available into 1932, I do not know, having no full

catalogues later than 1930. (Further details on 101s can be found in the February 1990 issue of *Hillandale News*.)

Information is sparse on Columbia and Decca: the Columbia 100, 201 and 202 were all late entries, introduced in 1930 (or late 1929): the 100 was probably quite short lived, but the 201 and 202 (re-workings of the earlier 109 and 112 respectively) probably survived until 1935, when they gave way to the 204, a Columbia/HMV hybrid. This had a long life, especially in the HMV version (97), although in the fifties the Columbia version was slightly modified, as the 211. This, like the HMV 102, was still on offer in 1960.

Information on acoustic gramophones after about 1930 is sparse because, as Mr Hammond has noticed, they received little promotion.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Proudfoot, Fawkham, Kent

EMG

Dear Chris,

I am getting increasingly frustrated by coming across one difficulty after another in trying to discover the details of the history of EMG before and after the Great Schism with Davey.

On the basis that if you want something doing - do it yourself - I am wondering whether to undertake the task of compiling such a history. Before I start however, it occurs to me that I may not be the first to have this idea, and that one of your readers may already have completed this task, or maybe has very nearly done so. So - is there anybody out there who has any information, or a complete history who will save me the trouble? Anybody who can offer help, encouragement or anything? It seems a task that needs to be undertaken, and preferably by another EMG nut!

Nuttily Yours,

Frank James, [REDACTED]
Longhope, Gloucester GL17 0RF

{How about an article for *Hillandale News*? Ed.}

Earliest born recording artist

Dear Chris,

Alfred, Lord Tennyson was born at Somerby, Lincolnshire on 8th August 1809. Pope Leo XIII was born at Carpinato (with the family name of Pecci) on 2nd March 1810.

Members must decide for themselves whether they wish to have a commercial recording or otherwise. Two pale brown wax cylinders (at least) of Tennyson exist. I saw them when I was the "under-bidder" at Christie's some 16 or so years ago. I gave up when the bidding reached the stage of my requiring a bank-overdraught!!! I am still on friendly terms with the successful gentleman, so I'll not reveal what he paid!

While most of us have been thinking of those recording the voice, was there an instrumentalist born very early in the 19th Century who committed his music-making to wax extremely late in life? Who were the anonymous pianist and clarinettist on the 5" Berliner discs?

Sincerely,

Ernie Bayly, Bournemouth

Guide to Machines

Dear Chris,

In response to the letter of Gary P. Jackson of Southampton in the February 1994 issue of *Hillandale News* and to your answer to him: Yes! there is a definite need for information directed towards the entry level collector in our field.

That was one of the primary motivations for my writing *HAND-CRANKED PHONOGRAPHS - It All Started With Edison* (available from C.L.P.G.S. Booklist). Although written predominantly about American machines (both phonographs and gramophones) there is a wealth of information for the entry level collector not available from any one source any place else. We that have been collecting for years blithely pick up a cylinder and readily identify it as a two minute wax or as an indestructible or as a Blue Amberol. But when the novice is faced with a cylinder he often cannot identify which cylinder is correct for their new phonograph. They may not even be able to determine whether their phonograph is a two-minute only or a two/four minute combination. Hopefully *HAND-CRANKED PHONOGRAPHS...* will answer many of the questions in the minds of the new collector, and possibly even answer many of the questions which have not even yet occurred to the novice.

While on my soap-box, a brief (sic.) word about semantics. In the U.K. and Europe there are definite divisions between 'Phonographs' (cylinder) and 'Gramophones' (disc). In the U.S. there doesn't seem to be as much concern over labelling the type of machine. They are generally all known as phonographs. We realize that the correct name for a Victor/Berliner talking machine should be a gramophone, but often these are referred to merely as phonographs. I regularly get telephone calls from someone who has just acquired a cylinder phonograph from an antique shop or flea market/swap meet (or in your vernacular a 'boot sale') and since it is different in format from

their stereo, they will refer to it as a gramophone. They seem surprised that it is really called nothing more than a 'phonograph'. Titling my book *HAND-CRANKED PHONOGRAPHS...* seems to imply that only cylinder machines are addressed. Not true, and Mr Benet Bergonzi told me that he had a similar problem with his book *OLD GRAMOPHONES*. Both books address both recorded formats.

Best regards,

Neil Maken, Huntington Beach, California

Rex 8905

Dear Sir,

When I read David Riches' letter in Hillendale News No.196 I looked to see if my copies of Rex 8905 are similarly marked.

I found I have two copies and was surprised to find them both signed but not identical. The signatures are differently placed relative to the record number, also impressed, on Side A, although identical on Side B. I wonder if the signatures were stamped in a separate process in some way as this would explain how they come to be differently placed.

After having this interesting fact brought to my attention, I noticed on Jumbo Record 656, sides A28202 and A28205, that Billy Williams had similarly signed both sides. Did any other artists also sign their masters and if so perhaps somebody could give details

Yours sincerely,

Mike Shaw, Banbury, Oxfordshire

C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

THE COMMITMENT

The Booklist has changed - we hope for the better and - trust that you feel that the changes bring some improvement to the service we offer. On our part we will endeavour to return your completed orders within seven days. Books are despatched every Saturday. If we receive your order on a Friday it will be despatched the following day. Delays should only occur on those occasions when a book is temporarily out of stock. Delays will also occur if you make mistakes or there are ambiguities on your order form so **PLEASE** read these notes carefully.

THE CHANGES

Your first Booklist will be included with the June 1994 issue of *Hillandale News*. Should you require additional copies send SAE to address given.

The Order Form is separate; one will be supplied with the new Booklist. All orders despatched will contain a new Order Form. Should you require new Order Forms, once again a SAE is necessary.

Please note the new numbering system for our books and other items. Please use these numbers from receipt of the June 1994 issue of *Hillandale News*. The new Booklist supersedes all previous lists. Using the old lists will result in delays.

Payment is required with order and cheques and money orders should in all instances be made payable to C.L.P.G.S., and not, please, to myself.

The Booklist will be updated on a regular basis and as we do so you will receive a copy with your *Hillandale News*. Of course, you may order extra copies if you wish. Please only order from the current list as it may differ, particularly where prices are concerned, from earlier lists. By using the current list you will prevent delays.

In line with recent practice books obtained for sale between Booklist printings will be advertised in *Hillandale News* or offered on a separate order form.

When an item cannot be supplied a Credit Note will be issued for the relevant amount. This can be redeemed against a future order (please return it with that order) or the Treasurer can issue a cheque for the amount of the credit. Items starred * in the Booklist are supplied but not held in stock so they will inevitably fall outside our seven day commitment. The Booklist does not supply back issues of *Hillandale News*. Some are available and details can be obtained on application to the Treasurer.

Two major changes should be noted.

A number of prices have risen due to the printing costs of our suppliers and in part help to cover our own overheads. Though some of these rises are hefty I believe we still offer value for money. Indeed in one case we have been able to lower the cost by a £1 and that item (the reprinted *HMV 1930 Machine Catalogue*) represents exceptional value.

The other change affects postage and packing. Long-standing members will know that for some considerable time now the Society has borne the increased cost of postage and packing within the overall price of our books; while for overseas customers the postal charges have not reflected the real cost. Sadly we can no longer continue this policy and the following Postal Charges will now apply (They are also detailed in the new Order Form):

POSTAL CHARGES FOR THE U.K. ONLY

Items with a total value of **£5 or less** will carry a p&p charge of **£0.50p**

Items with a total value of **over £5 up to and including £10** will carry a p&p charge of **£1.00**

Items totalling **over £10.00** in value are subject a p&p charge of **10%**

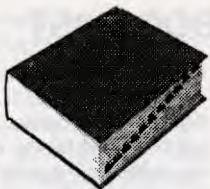
OVERSEAS POSTAL CHARGES

Overseas charges are increased to **15%** of the total value of the order.

Where **15%** of the order is **less than £1.00** then a charge of **£1** p&p must be added.

Don Moore

REVIEW



THE PARLOPHONE RED LABEL POPULAR SERIES E 5000 to E 6428 compiled by Arthur Badrock

As its newest publication the Society is offering *The Parlophone Red Label Popular Series*, compiled by Arthur Badrock, with historical research by Frank Andrews and typesetting and label help from several friends. These are in the numbers E 5000 to E 6428, spanning the 7½ years from October 1923 to July 1931, a considerably shorter time than, say, the HMV Bs and Cs spanning 1912 to 1958, but in their way including an equally important side of recording and social history.

A branch of The Parlophone Company was established in Great Britain in 1923 and immediately set up recording facilities with Oscar Preuss at Hertford, and determined a classical and popular catalogue to be ready for October. The first Parlophone listings borrowed heavily from outside, British and European Bekas - some going back pre-1914 - and then from the American Okeh, both branches of the Lindström empire, until the home-bred recordings mostly of ballads and light songs built up.

It is for the Okeh records of jazz and hot music - headed as *The Latest American Dance Music* - that the 10" Red label Popular Series is best remembered and sought today; the brightly recorded Okehs, pressed on silent surface Parlophone at Hertford probably never sold very widely because that sort of music tended to be looked down on in Britain of the 1920s, but it is fascinating to recall who appeared on

the series. They included Rosetta Crawford, Margaret Johnson, Sarah Martin, Eva Taylor, Sidney Bechet, Clarence Williams, Louis Armstrong, Ada Brown, Bennie Moten's Orchestra, ODJB, Goofus Five, Arcadian Serenaders, Trumbauer with Bix, and the Dorsey Brothers. Many more appeared under pseudonyms. From an old Okeh ledger page that is reproduced, many masters were shown as sent over here by Okeh, but never pressed presumably for economic reasons and are now lost, and the names of performers listed will raise the blood pressure of today's collector, though presumably available in the States on Okeh.

At the later end of the twenties our own bands like Bertini, Herman Darewski and Ronnie Munro made recordings for this label, and a few less prominent British bands are here. For the gramophone owner of the day there was just about everything: organs, sacred, Hawaiian bands, military and brass bands and soloists, light orchestras from central Europe or the Prince of Wales Cinema, Lewisham, accordion, banjo and xylophone solos, and plenty of comedy with Charlie Penrose and Billy Williams, men of all labels. *The Parlophone Laughing Record(s)* was on the 1923 list, by no means its first airing, and it just saw the last war out on the magenta label, as did several other parlophone Red Labels.

As a 78 collector I have always wondered why Parlophone chose 'E' as prefix for both its 10" Popular and its 12" Classical label - confusing but perhaps it denoted 'England' in both cases.

This is a well-produced catalogue and a credit to all concerned in getting it to us; it has been long-awaited and well worth it. This book (85pp, plus 4 illustrated pages) is available, Price £16 including postage from the **Society's Booklist**. (Overseas orders should add 10%)

George Frow

PHONO-GRAFICS

by Arnold Schwatzman

Arnold Schwatzman is a film maker, graphic designer, author and collector of printed ephemera. A designer of some considerable experience, he was Director of Design of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. This book stems from his profession as a designer and his passions for the printed ephemera associated with the talking machine.

As one would expect from a book emanating from such a source it demands attention. A casual glance and you are hooked, drawn to the book by its own very striking design. Measuring seven inches by eight inches the book is soft covered and printed on the outside covers to resemble a small 78rpm record. This in turn is housed in a cardboard 'record sleeve' complete with a hole to display the label.

It would be easy to discard this book, after a casual glance, as another coffee table book. The text is minimal and subject, I suspect, to a touch of poetic licence in mentioning C.L.P.G.S. meetings, but it is a celebration

of the art of graphic design during the first half of the twentieth century; graphic design that is pertaining to the talking machine. It is after all subtitled *The Visual Paraphenalia of the Talking Machine*.

Published in America for the home market the machines pictured in the book are American models, though all major names are instantly recognisable to most British collectors.

There are 119 pages packed with a treasure trove of nostalgia to stir the memories. The photography, the graphics, the reproduction of posters, postcards and advertising material are absolutely magnificent. I found the photographs of phonographs and gramophones particularly stunning.

There is nothing boring about this book. Every page produces something of interest for the reader. It is a quality production which I am sure members will enjoy.

It is available from the Society's Booklist c/o Don Moore, [REDACTED] Road, Caistor, Lincolnshire LN7 6RX price £15 including postage. (Overseas orders should add 10%)

Don Moore

Canadian Antique Phonograph Society

The interests of the 250 members of the Canadian Antique Phonograph Society (CAPS) range across all aspects of sound recording and its history: phonographs and gramophones, all types of sound recordings of historic importance, and related memorabilia. There is particular emphasis placed on the history of recorded sound in Canada.

Membership, which includes a 6-issue subscription to CAPS newsletter, *Antique Phonograph News*, costs \$20.00 U.S. per year. The Society meets on a regular basis, currently eight times a year between September and June, in Toronto and Oshawa, Ontario. Each meeting attracts more than 50 members and guests, and includes a presentation on one aspect or another of recorded-sound history and an auction of a wide variety of sound machines, recordings and related artifacts. Please contact: Bill Pratt, Treasurer, Canadian Antique Phonograph Society, [REDACTED] Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2L2, CANADA

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UNDER THE HAMMER



**Christie's South Kensington,
December 9th 1993**

This sale had a larger number of gramophones and phonographs than has been seen for some time. The greatest part was represented by the Paul Woollons collection, but the preceding thirty-four Lots from various sources included one or two noteworthy pieces.

The Christie's advertisement in the December *Hillandale News* showed a trademark gramophone and a needle tin. The gramophone, which had a brass horn, ten Berliner records and a contemporary (but not 'factory') fitted case, was knocked down at £2,600. The needle tin, a Rosco, was part of a lesser lot comprising a rather scruffy Columbia 123a bijou grand, a box of records and five more ordinary needle tins. These brought £75.

Re-entrants were represented by two oak 163s, the first being one of the smartest I have seen for a very long time. It brought £650, while the other, whose lid had been restored by a joiner who obviously hadn't thought to check another example to see how it should look, still managed £400. Against these prices for what is a very common model, £280 might seem a bargain for a beautifully preserved Model 13 of about 1921. It still had a little tin clip designed to protect the governor in transit from Hayes to the first owner, the lid key, instructions and several needle tins including a Pyramid.

A fairly plain Klingsor, with some restrained Art Nouveau carving on the doors, brought £800, and £50 less was respectable for an HMV 460 with a heavily repaired Lumière diaphragm and a rather lighter shade of oak than it had when it left the factory. Talking of shades, a red 101 brought £90, but a red leather Peter Pan, the first ever seen by the writer, achieved £420. £1,700 was paid for a G&T mahogany-cased double-spring Monarch with a brass Morning Glory horn - how refreshing to see one that is right, and not a recent Indian import.

The Woollons collection accounted for nearly fifty lots of well-presented gramophones and phonographs and related ephemera. Notable among the latter were an album of gramophone related postcards, totally about 90, which brought £900, an HMV car badge at £550, twenty sound-boxes, various tone-arms and other parts at £420 and two Edison Combination attachments, still in their boxes, with a 2/4 minute lever for a Home/Triumph and a Premier Gem combination attachment, all for £160.

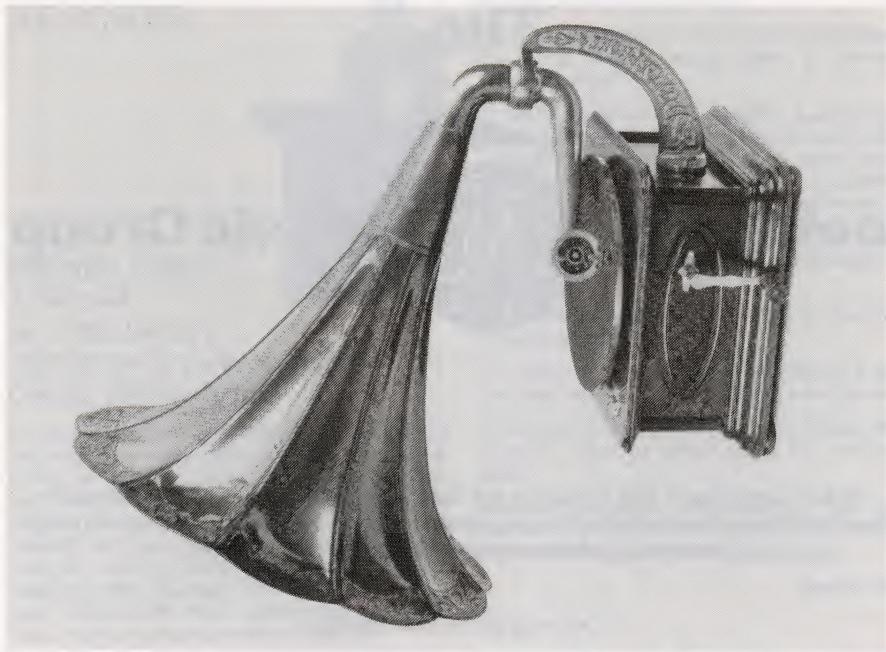
The machines themselves included the following, all in very good condition:

Gramophone Co. Style 6 in case (with strange, but correct-looking, aluminium horn)	£1,300
Drip-pan Gem	£550
Suitcase Standard	£320
Suitcase Home	£550
Excelsior	£400
Fireside with Fireside Horn	£750
Columbia BQ tone-arm Graphophone with maroon horn	£1,000
Edison Bell Standard (immaculate, but with new horn)	£480
Concert (Opera), woodwork restored	£3,000
G&T Style 4	£1,500
Amberola 75	£400
Zonophone New Compton	£650
Monarch Junior, brass witch's hat horn	£1,100
Dulcephone with brass flower horn	£2,000
Intermediate Monarch with mahogany horn and case	£1,400

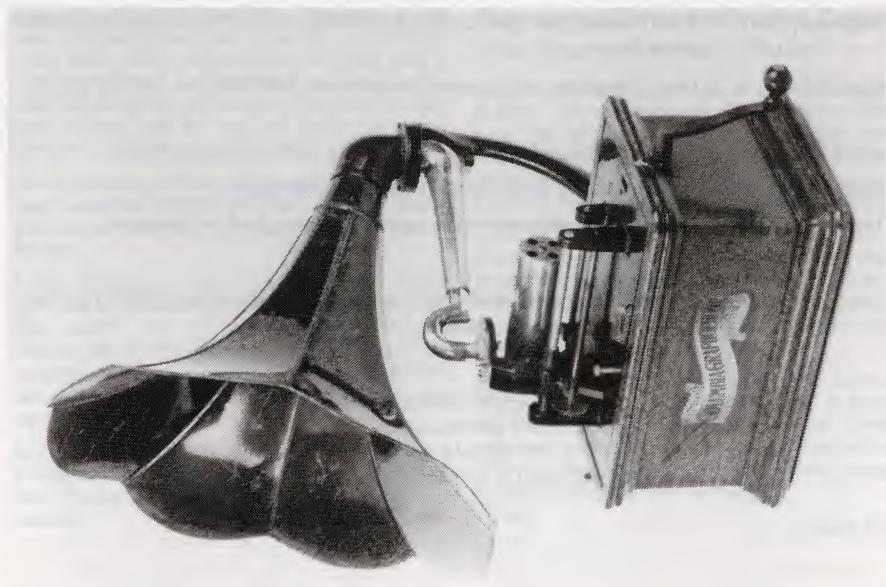
The £2,000 Dulcephone has to be the star of the show; it was an exceptionally handsome machine, and that often counts for more than rarity or pedigree.

(All prices quoted are exclusive of the 10% Buyer's Premium)

Christopher Proudfoot



Dulcephone with brass flower horn



Columbia BQ Graphophone

The Clockwork Music Group

We have again been able to reserve the Activities Room at the Science Museum in Blandford Street, Newcastle for our group meetings in 1994. As usual they are arranged for saturday afternoons between 2.00pm and 4.00pm.

Our programme is as follows:

- February 26th** Fred Fowler is to give a selection of his records with some questions thrown in
- April 23rd** Ray Stevenson will present Sweeties of the Thirties - on 78s of course!
- June 25th** Steve Sutton will present some of his more unusual records
- September 17th** Ed Bardsley is preparing another musical quiz
- December 10th** Derek Greenacre will once again give us a thrill in the dark

I hope that the dates are convenient and you come along, preferably clutching a few artifacts.

Phil Bailey,

████████████████
NEWCASTLE ON TYNE NE16 4ES

Tel: ██████████

REPORTS



Midlands Group AGM held on 15th January 1993 at Carrs Lane Methodist Centre, Birmingham

In his Chairman's Report Eddie Dunn pointed out that we had now completed 26 years as a group. During the past year all our six meetings had been well attended with a good mix of programme subjects. The change to two programmes per meeting with each being shorter and of different material seems to have been well received by members. Nine members and one guest speaker were involved with these programmes and Eddie thanked all concerned for their contributions.

Both Phonofairs organised by the Group were a success and profits from both contributed to the room hire charges we have to pay for our meetings. Some doubt had surfaced about our being able to continue to hold our meetings at Carrs Lane Methodist Centre but all problems now seem to have been resolved and we can look to the future with optimism.

All our existing officers and committee members were re-elected. Roger Preston's Treasurer's Report showed that our financial position had improved over the year.

It was pleasant to see a varied array of talking machines at this meeting, including an HMV Monarch style wooden horn gramophone and a Murdoch machine with a metal horn; both of these were in fine condition. An almost original Pixie-Grippa portable was also much admired and 2 Edison phonographs completed the display.

As is usual at our AGMs, there is no set programme of entertainment, but members were invited to bring along favourite items on tape, disc, cylinder or whatever.

Amongst the items played were:

A cylinder supposed to be by William Gladstone, the prime minister, paying tribute to Edison's recording efforts.

A morale boosting talk on mini-disc, issued during the Second World War, from General de Gaulle. These discs were dropped from aircraft over France to encourage the resistance to continue their efforts until the Allies liberated their country.

A 78 of Billy Williams entitled *The Collier* would surely not be accepted today with its references to dark skins.

Ray Noble and His Orchestra playing *Shout for Happiness* featured Al Bowlly.

An Edison 4 minute cylinder recording of a bell solo was featured in an early Pathé home movie.

A 78 of the French singer Rina Ketty singing *Why Does My Heart go 'Boom'* ended the entertainment.

Time ran out before everyone, who had some entertainment with them, could play their choice. In spite of this it was a most enjoyable evening.

Geoff Howl

Midland Group Record Fayre, 19th February 1994 at Methodist Central Hall, Ablewell Street, Walsall

Last year a similar event was at the same venue in June. This one followed a similar pattern. Attendance was on the same level as last year and a welcome profit was made from the event helping to boost our funds. The sales of items from the Society's Booklist went well and helped to boost the turnover there.

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. It was a pleasant informal occasion with friends to talk to and a large range of items to buy including two (yes two) HMV Wooden Horn Gramophones in virtually original condition.

As always, the catering was fine and we urge those, who were unable to be present this time, to come to the Phonofair at Wolverhampton on 8th October 1994 and to the next Record Fayre at Walsall (date yet to be fixed) for they do not know what bargains and enjoyment they have missed!

Geoff Howl

London Meeting, January 20th 1994

The New Year started with her best foot forward for our January Meeting at Exhibition Road. To a full house of members and friends Ruth Edge, the archivist of EMI Music Ltd., armed with slides and a cassette, gave our Society an insight into The Gramophone Company Ltd.'s move to Hayes.

Ruth first outlined her own working life and gave us glimpses of cramped storage areas full of both machines and records (some 400,000 records and 8,000 CDs) all of which have been listed on computer and cross-referenced. (To all this has been added the back catalogues of Chrysalis Records Ltd. and Virgin Records Ltd., two companies which Thorn - EMI Ltd. had recently purchased.)

She then delved back into the distant past to the days of Maiden Lane and City Road. By 1905 these premises had become outdated and the Hanover factory was fully stretched trying to keep pace with demand. The Directors of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd., after considering expanding the German factory, in the autumn of 1906 decided to erect a British manufacturing plant. This plan, announced in *The Times* of October 16th 1906, resulted in a letter from a Mr Marshall Robinson (both a shareholder in the company and an architect) offering his services to design the new factory and to supervise its construction. After the November 14th Board Meeting Mr Robinson was appointed to carry out these tasks and was despatched to Hanover to meet Joseph Berliner and discuss the requirements.

Robinson was instructed by the Board of Directors to negotiate with the Hayes Development Company Ltd. for the purchase of some land they owned. Eventually some 11 acres at Hayes were purchased for £7,000. The eminent Victorian tenor, Edward Lloyd was engaged to cut the first sod on the new site in March 1907. He was conveyed to the site by Trevor Williams, The Gramophone Typewriter Ltd.'s Chairman, who was a keen motorist. The silver spade Lloyd used has been lost but the sundial mounted to mark this historic occasion now rests safely in Thorn-EMI Ltd.'s museum at the Hayes site.

Dame Nellie Melba, was invited to lay the foundation stone and performed the ceremony on 13th May 1907 after being entertained at the Ritz by Trevor Williams. The other directors were entertained at the Trocadero. On arrival at Hayes, Mr Mark Barr, the Chief Engineer, presented Melba with a bouquet of flowers. Theodore Birnbaum, the Managing Director, gave Melba a silver inscribed trowel as she laid the foundation stone. Dressed in black, Melba, who had

just returned to Britain, caught a chill and was unable to appear at Covent Garden the following Tuesday. A film was made of the foundation stone ceremony and was run at the Palace Theatre that same evening to Melba and invited guests.

Between the years 1908-1909 the profits of The Gramophone Company Ltd. dropped to £59,000. Apparently this was caused by the inability of Eldridge Johnson to supply cheap gramophones. The directors decided to erect a cabinet factory at Hayes costing some £45,000. This building, which occupied some 5 acres, was designed by R. Langton Cole. This was one of the first buildings to be constructed from ferro-concrete.

Mr F. E. Brown from Beeston, a suburb of Nottingham, was appointed manager of the cabinet factory and despatched to Camden, New Jersey for six weeks to study the American style of manufacture in order to mirror this at Hayes. The joint Managing Directors, Alfred Clark and Sidney Dixon, decided to close City Road and erect a new office block at Hayes to accommodate 50 staff. Building started in January 1911 and the keys were handed over on May 10th. The removal from City Road took place in the last three days of June 1911. From this date all board meetings were held at Hayes. Within a month of occupying the new building an extension was already envisaged.

In contrast to Melba's visit, the laying of the foundation stone of the cabinet factory was a relatively low-keyed affair. Louisa Tetrazzini, and her husband, Giuseppe Campanari drove themselves to Hayes and Tetrazzini was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark. The party then walked $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile on a tour through the record factory. Tetrazzini stopped to press one of her recordings, which was presented to her 7 minutes later. The stone was laid at 4pm and was inscribed in gold with the words: "This stone was laid by Mme Tetrazzini on July 20th 1911." Tetrazzini returned to Hayes in October 1911 to give a concert in the polishing shop of the nearly completed cabinet factory for the HMV workers. A special train left Paddington at 6pm, returning at 8.30pm. For the concert Mr Percy Pitt, the Musical Director of Covent Garden, accompanied her at the piano.

Hayes continued to grow and 1912 saw a machine factory erected to combat foreign competition. Production was to have started in 1914 but the outbreak of hostilities prevented that. Chaliapin opened the new recording studio at Hayes in June 1912.

Ruth showed us a picture of Tetrazzini and Harry Lauder. Lauder had signed up with The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. in 1903 but when Pathé started

to issue Lauder discs in 1905 from cylinder recordings, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. made moves to have them withdrawn. Sales of Lauder's records in 1908 were: 10" Gramophone Concert Records 22,000, 12" Gramophone Monarch Records 3,000 and 10" Zonophone records 65,000. Incidentally Celebrity Records represented only 3% of total sales of records.

Lauder did a large amount of work for the forces in the Great War, in spite of losing his only son in that conflict. Ruth played an extract from his *Appeal for £1,000,000 for Maimed Scottish Sailors and Soldiers* on HMV D1. This was issued in February 1918 at 6/6d. It is rarely encountered today.

By the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 British record sales had reached a staggering 13,000,000 discs! The cabinet factory was turned over to making ammunition boxes and later propeller blades for aeroplanes. In January 1919 production returned to normal and in the following year some 6,000 machines were produced.

Thanks are due to Ruth Edge for giving us such an interesting and revelatory insight into the affairs of the Gramophone Company Ltd. prior to the First World War and for showing us so many rarely seen photographs from the archives.

G.W.

London Meeting, February 17th 1993

Ruth Lambert in her talk on *Point of Sale* achieved a rarity - a London Meeting without any music - but provided openings for discussion on this little-known side of gramophone history.

She revealed having once come round to needle boxes as a collector of cigarette and tobacco tins and found a greater interest in these, and to a lesser extent in their contents. Needle boxes often came in cabinets and dummy displays for counters and windows. HMV sold these 'Silent Salesmen' to dealers for £5 and there were several varieties put out by Songster.

Some needle boxes have become highly desirable and that means a money value, a long stride from the stability of pre-war days when prices were printed on the displays, and collectors will recall that it wasn't so long ago when needle boxes were left inside secondhand gramophone cabinets at no extra cost.

An unusual and pleasurable evening.

A London Correspondent

Brian Taylor Antiques

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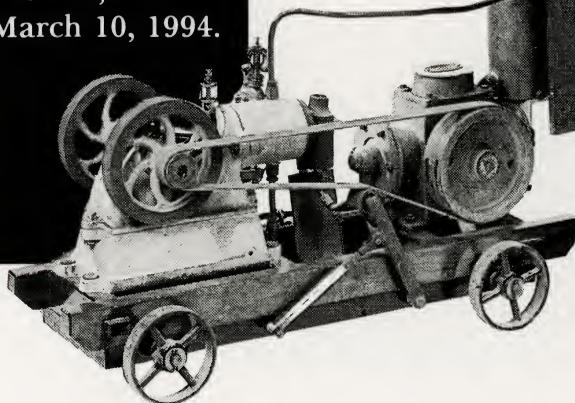
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Enquiries: Christopher Proudfoot on [REDACTED]

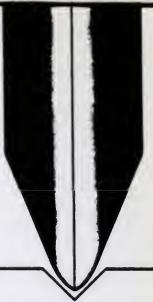
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